REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-8 remain in the application. Claims 1-8 are subject to examination. Claim 1 has been amended.

Under the heading "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102" on pages 2-4 of the above-identified Office Action, claims 1, 2 4-6 and 8 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,721,666 to Girard (hereinafter Girard) under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Girard teaches a molded assembly 24 formed of a face appliqué 26 and a molded portion 28. The molded assembly has a plurality of controls 40 shown on the face appliqué 26. The controls 40 are formed in a device assembly 41 and include components 42 and panel circuitry 43. As best shown in Fig. 5, the molded assembly 24 includes a panel structure 44 that is at least partially encapsulated by the molded portion 28. The components 42 are provided within the panel structure 44. The molded portion 28 has a window or recess 52 in which the panel structure 44 is held. The window 52 is slightly larger than the panel structure so as to protect the panel structure 44 during the injection of the molded assembly 28.
The panel structure 44 is a layered structure formed as follows: a first outer layer formed by the face appliqué 26, a

second middle layer formed by the component 42, and a third outer layer formed by a back panel 94. The molded assembly 28 abuts the back panel 94.

Turning now to the invention of the instant application. The goal of the invention is to present an operating panel configuration 10, which is formed of two separable parts 12, 14. The first part is an operating panel 12, which can easily be adapted to changes of layout, design and graphical requirements of the appliance. The second part of the configuration is a control circuit 14 wherein electronics, control devices and a display are concentrated. Using such a configuration it is easily possible to modify the layout of the operating panel without the necessity of an expensive redesign of electronics of the control circuit. The operating panel 12 has a single through opening for receiving the control circuit from a rear side insertion.

Unfortunately, the Examiner did not positively state what features of Girard read on what features of the instant application and therefore applicants address various possible readings.

First, the face appliqué 26 of Girard corresponds to the operating panel 12 having the single through opening 36 of the instant application. However, it is noted that the face

appliqué 26 does not having an opening for receiving the control circuitry 42 and therefore cannot read on claim 1 of the instant application.

Second, the molded assembly 24 of Girard corresponds to the operating panel configuration 10 of the instant application. However, the molded assembly 24 is not formed of two separable parts, namely the control panel 12 and the control circuit 14 of the instant application are separable parts. In contrast, the panel structure 44 (26, 41, 42, 43, 94) is encapsulated with the molded piece 28 as a single unit and therefore is not a separable molded assembly 24.

Third, the molded assembly 24 corresponds to the control circuit 14 of the instant application. However, in this scenario, Girard does not disclose an operating panel 12 as in the instant application. Such an operating panel 12 cannot be the household appliance 20, 22 (Girard) itself as the invention of the instant application is a two-piece operating panel configuration inserted into the household appliance.

Fourth, the molded piece 28 and the panel structure 44 (26, 41, 42, 43, 94) fitted in the window of the molded piece of Girard is equivalent to the operating panel 12 and control circuit 14 of the instant application. First, it is noted that the molded piece 28 and the panel structure 44 are <u>not</u>

separable. Second, it is noted that the panel is set into the window 52. The window 52 is not a through hole and is cup shaped and can only receive the panel structure 44 from the front side.

Please note that claim 1 of the instant application has been amended to better support the above-recited arguments. Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the opening is a "through opening" and that the parts 12 and 14 are separable parts. Support for these features is clearly shown in Fig. 2 that shows the opening as a through opening and the parts 12 and 14 being separable. In addition, the overriding concept of the invention of the instant application is that the control panel 12 stays constant and the control circuitry 14 can be changed as necessary for different appliances and inserted into the same control panel. Therefore, the control panel 12 and the control circuitry are inherently separable.

In view of the above, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the anticipation rejection based on Girard.

Under the heading "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103" on pages 4-5 of the above-identified Office Action, claims 3 and 7 have been rejected as being obvious over Girard under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Claims 3 and 7 depend from amended claim 1 which is believed to be allowable. Therefore, claims 3 and 7 are also believed to be allowable.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 1. Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art. The dependent claims are believed to be patentable as well because they all are ultimately dependent on claim 1.

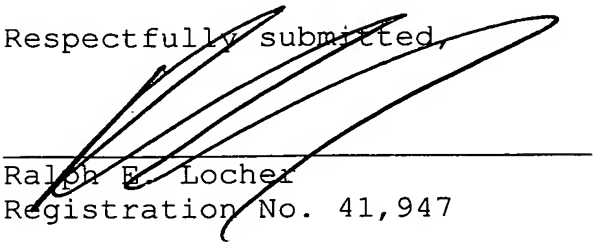
In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-8 are solicited.

If an extension of time is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Any extension fee associated therewith should be charged to the Deposit Account of Lerner Greenberg Stemer LLP, No. 12-1099.

Please charge any other fees that might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner

Greenberg Stemer LLP, No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,



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